Vol. IX, No. 11 HUMAN EVENTS March 12, 1952

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MAR 18 '52 LIBRARY

THE ADAM SMITH CLUBS

By Frank Chodorov

I WAS TALKING to a group of deplorers. There is no dearth of them these days, what with the national passion for pushing power on the government. This group, however, was most concerned with the spread of collectivistic bilge in our schools and colleges. Of a certainty, what we are getting in the way of legislation and propaganda is the result of what has been learned and is being taught. It follows that any change in the direction of both legislation and public thought must begin with education. Something had to be done about it.

One man suggested the establishment of a College of Individualism, as a sort of intellectual powerhouse to feed ideas to other disseminators. Innocently, I asked the question: what is individualism? I was aiming at a curriculum.

There was a good deal of floundering, as I had anticipated. In politics — we were sure of that — individualism is a negative point of view: cut government to the bone. But, what is the allowable minimum? The downright anarchist was for abolishing all government, on the premise that people would improve morally by its absence; the majority allowed that a traffic cop is a social need.

In economics, all of us accepted the general line of thought laid down by Adam Smith, though one man declared Smith's ideas on free trade impractical under present world conditions, and that brought on a heated argument. A theologian in the group insisted that individualism is primarily a spiritual concept, and if that were set straight the rest of the curriculum would take care of itself.

The curriculum, one bold voice suggested, is of minor importance; the faculty is the thing. Whatever subject an individualist handles, he maintained, he cannot help but bring his values to bear upon it; just as a collectivist, teaching biology, cannot refrain from comparing the innards of a frog with the organization of the State. The thing to do, then, is to pack the faculty with dyed-in-the-wool individualists and let each formulate his own course. The students would get a full dose of individualism whatever they studied.

This idea posed a new question: what is an individualist? Is he born or made? Socialism laughs at the theory of innate characteristics and insists that we come into this

Copyright 1952 by HUMAN EVENTS, INC.
Published weekly at 1136 Eighteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

world without temperamental shape; men can be turned by environment, including education, this way or that. Yet, the constant recurrence of the rebel is an historical refutation of this Socialistic thesis, and every mother of more than one child will bear witness against it. Some of us conform easily, others find it necessary to question every existing convention. Perhaps psychology could furnish us with an explanation of the individualist; or, of the socialist.

If individualism is not an acquired characteristic, but is grounded in one's personality, what can education do about it? Nothing more than to give articulation to what the student already feels. For instance, if he instinctively finds regulation repugnant, he will be helped no end by an understanding of the doctrine of natural rights; conversely, if he is a regimenter at heart, he will rationalize that doctrine into a myth. The purpose of teaching individualism, then, is not to make individualists but to find them. Rather, to help them find themselves. If a student takes readily to such values as the primacy of the individual, the free market place, or the immorality of taxation, he is an individualist; if he swallows hard, he must be counted a recruit for the other side.

AT THIS POINT, someone brought up a current phenomenon: the increasing number of deserters from the Communist camp. If these recanters came to Communism by natural selection, how could they throw it off? Or, did they? Is an intellectual conversion capable of purging an innate inclination?

The books written by these exes give a clue to the answer. One does not get from their confessions of sin, or exposés of Soviet skullduggery, the idea that the authors are done with collectivism. Their sneering references to capitalism indicate that they are of the same opinion still. Communism, they will admit, is Socialism gone hog-wild, but they do not seem capable of recognizing this as an inevitable consequence. Their hatred of Communism does not make them individualists.

This is not to question the sincerity of those who have hit the sawdust trail. Far from it. The individualist, who accepts as basic the right of every man to make a fool of himself — provided he does not infringe the equal right of others — is quick to accept the repentance at face value. But, repentance is not conversion; there is reason to believe that conversion is impossible.

The "right-wing" socialist is another case in point. The hatred he harbors for Communism is intense, but only because he looks upon it as treason. He condemns Stalin and his crowd because they have, forsooth, betrayed the Marxist ideal. In the hands of good and true Socialists — right-wingers, of course — the Russian "experiment"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of 1918 would by now have come up with a shining demonstration of the Socialist promise. No amount of logic can convince him that the only possible result of Marxism in practice is Russia, as is.

COMING to the garden variety of collectivist — the do-gooder, who differs from the socialist only in that he substitutes sentimental clichés for "scientific" Socialism — he too seems psychologically incapable of letting people alone. He too is inexorably bent on hammering out the Good Society on the political anvil. He too has the perfect recipe, an ingredient of which is his own capacity for improving others. It is endemic.

All the evidence points to the collectivist as a breed, not a product. Which is also true of the individualist. The main characteristic of the one is an urge to ride herd on mankind, while the other is inclined to give mankind a wide berth. The collectivist idealizes group behavior because he feels an inadequacy in himself; he must be part of a mob and therefore he organizes and joins. The individualist abhors labels.

The volume of sound generated by the organized collectivist gives him undue prominence. He seems to be the majority. Yet, if nature is as impartial in the distribution of temperaments as she is in the apportionment of sexes, there should be as many individualists around as the other kind. Nor can we overlook the possibility that all of us have a penchant both ways, being part individualist and part collectivist, in differing degrees; one could adduce evidence in favor of that thesis.

Only education can give the right answer; for the function of education is to bring to the surface what nature has implanted in the person. If the educational machinery of the country had not been overrun by the collectivists (operating under cover of "academic freedom"), if individualism were given a fair share of the curriculum, we could easily find out how many of us prefer freedom, how many of us are destined to be mob material.

RETURNING to our group of deplorers, we got around to the need of stirring up an interest in the individualistic philosophy on the college campus. To be sure, we knew that the younger children were being subjected to the cacophony of collectivism, and a thorough job of saving must include the lower grades, even the kindergarten. But, immediacy suggested throwing a lifeline to adolescent individualists, those who will have a hand in shaping the world directly ahead.

As a *modus operandi,* we thought of encouraging the formation of what we called Adam Smith Clubs. This would have to be an extracurricular activity, for two reasons:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one, the monopolization of the classroom by the faculty collectivists is too solid to permit penetration; two, these clubs would pick up, by a process of self-selection, the element susceptible of help.

Suppose it were noised about that at the next meeting of the club, a speaker would hold forth on the iniquity of the income tax, or would expose the fraud of social security; those who instinctively rejected the textbook apotheoses of these two institutions would attend, while the energumens of collective action would stay away, especially if they had once felt the uncongenial atmosphere. Every Adam Smith Club would be a campus "educable elite".

On the face of it, an Adam Smith Club would be an evidence of a dissident voice on the campus and, considering the vogue of Keynesianism and pragmatism in our colleges, it would be looked upon with disfavor by the vested collectivists and campus conformists. All the better. Any explicit or implicit opposition to the Club would convince the membership that they had got hold of an important truth. It is a known fact that the learning one acquires outside the lecture hall sticks closer to the ribs, especially if that learning is officially declared off limits.

It would be a pity if the Adam Smith Clubs achieved respectability; that would destroy their purpose. Their purpose should be not only to find and help the submerged individualist, but also to set him in opposition to the collectivism being laddled out by the professors. A compromise is impossible; it is a fight to the finish. The agenda of the meetings should include the preparation of refutations of textbook propaganda, to be fired in classroom, with the intent of stirring up latent individualists. If the Adam Smith Clubs are to be really educational, they must be radical in character.

For, it must be kept in mind that individualism is the modern radicalism. In the true sense of the word, individualism is always radical, for it rests its case on root ideas; it delves into the nature of things for basic causes; it rejects the idea that man is best served by a series of expedients.

In the political sense, individualism is the current radicalism because it is the ideology of the minority. The ultimate purpose of the Adam Smith Clubs should be to loosen the grip of Statism on the mass mind, to re-arouse in America an awareness of self-importance and self-reliance, to teach people that no social good can come out of politics.

There are, as a matter of fact, incipient Adam Smith Clubs on some campuses. The individualist simply cannot be eradicated. In every period of history when the machinery of the State, including education, was set against him, he made his spirit felt. It is not surprising, therefore, to hear of the spontaneous gathering of anti-collectivists at various colleges. These boys and girls should be given encouragement and help. And that would be the purpose of a College of Individualism.

ADDITIONAL COPIES: One—$.20; six—1.00; ten—1.50; fifty—5.50; one hundred—10.00. Quotations for larger quantities on request.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* — FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Editor*

Volume IX, No. 11 — Wednesday, March 12, 1952 — Washington, D. C.

UNIV. OF MINN. RECEIVED MAR 18 '52

New Hampshire: The outcome of the long-awaited GOP primary has substantially slowed down the Taft progress. It may well ease the difficulties of Ike's managers, at least for some time to come.

Much of the Taft distress at the result comes from clumsy publicity which made extravagant claims both for delegates and popular vote. In this respect, Taft discarded his 1950 campaign policy in Ohio, when caution was the note and caution paid dividends. These errors may prove good medicine, if realized, and a better coordinated and directed publicity policy may follow.

Actually, the popular vote for Ike was not too inspiring. The General's strength had been represented as being among the mass of voters rather than among the politicos, i.e., delegates. Yet, he made a sweep of the delegates and took only 50.04 per cent of the total vote cast. Before the election, Ike supporters thought that their man would have to poll at least 60 per cent of all votes to qualify as a "sweeping" victor.

Nor, indeed, did Taft's popular appeal prove exactly irresistible. The Ohioan may sway the reason but not the emotions of the average voter.

As for Kefauver's surprising victory over Truman in the Democratic primary, it serves as a useful reminder to Washington observers how unpopular the Chief Executive is out in the country. As we go to press, we hear from Fair Dealers that the defeat should persuade the President to declare his nomination as soon as possible and to go to work.

Reaction to Revolt: The Administration has evidently decided to give Russell's candidacy the silent treatment, for the moment. Hardly a word comes from the White House and even the "captive columnists", usually ready to hand out the latest "party line", have little to say.

The immediate tactic — according to our Administration sources — is to avoid attacking and provoking Russell and his Southern colleagues. The revolt, it is hoped, might die down — although no illusions are being nourished as to that. But, before another month, the outlines of the Administration attitude will become clearer, it is believed. Some of these outlines have already begun to leak out, as follows:

(1) The intellectuals — the ADA crowd — obviously deem a real Southern revolt a boon, rather than a handicap. They figure they won't lose all the Southern states. Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina, at least, may remain faithful. Meanwhile, they will recoup in the North. With no little justice, they can point out that this year there will be no Wallace Party splitting the northern Democratic vote. Such states as New York, Michigan and Maryland (which went GOP in '48 because of the Wallace vote) will return to the Democratic column. The strategy will be to intensify the appeal to minority groups and to make the propaganda even more left-wing.

(2) Party strategists and especially the machine politicos want to ring again and again the changes on the cry, "You never had it so good". Much propaganda analysis and preparation has already gone into this project.

Copyright 1952 by HUMAN EVENTS, INC.
Published weekly at 1136 Eighteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Meanwhile, impartial observers in the Capital are visibly affected by the Russell bid. There has been some talk about Russell running in Northern states to pick up conservative votes. But that, generally, is discounted. It is pointed out that Russell let pass the chance, last week, to file in Maryland. Friends of the Georgia Senator say he probably did not file because he did not wish to split the anti-Administration vote in that close state; that he preferred to let the Republicans exploit that vote. If that indeed was his consideration, then realignment of parties is farther along than generally conceded.

One of the best political observers we know in the Capital, himself a Southerner, phoned us on the morrow of the Russell announcement: "You were right about this revolt right along. And I was wrong. I thought I knew the Southern boys and I never thought they had that much courage. But now I think they will go through with it. If Russell, one of the most cautious leaders in the South, thinks a split is possible and necessary, then I think the Southern Democrats will break away from their Northern partners and take 128 electoral votes from the Administration next fall. The result will be a decision in the House of the Representatives. And we'll have a Republican President."

Thought Control: On the Hill, there is tall talk that the members will use the axe on funds for abroad, that the Administration will not be able to get away with their $8 billion request. But we wonder.

For, our sources in the State Department say that the Acheson "thought control" apparatus has already gone into action — and that the tall-talking members of Congress will start hearing from pressure groups in their constituencies, in favor of foreign funds. We have often described the subterranean "opinion-conditioning" technique of the Department — how it brings leaders of communities from all over the nation to Washington, then indoctrinates them cleverly behind closed doors.

Last week, we learn, one offensive was mounted for the benefit of a large number of these innocent visitors (transported here at the taxpayers' expense). The Administration knows that there is a great and growing objection to putting any more money into France, in view of its uncertain domestic politics and its failure to produce divisions for the Eisenhower army. Therefore, the subject at the "seminars" was the necessity of helping France, explanation of French politics, hopeful signs on the horizon, etc., etc. The visitors, it is expected, will return home and spread this "inside dope" and rally the opinion-formers in each little community in favor of the Administration line.

Last week too, visitors — among them many clubwomen — were treated to a colorful and laudatory picture of how well Point IV is already working. It has been continually stressed that appropriations for this activity are small and that it will be helpful to our businessmen who export or invest abroad. This line, of course, was simply preparatory.

Now the Point IV idea has been moved an important step further, with the President's speech of last week. Therein, he came out for grants of money to raise the living standards of such countries as India. Since that area has just about the lowest standard of all, one is justified in saying "now the sky is the limit".

As we have frequently stressed in this publication, Point IV is the greatest potential danger to our economy. And the President has now moved for real activation of Point IV. The way has been paved for future flooding of such countries as India with American dollars, and the massive tapping of American resources to try to accomplish what is an impossible task. Hence, the increasing tempo of "thought control" machinery to get appropriations. The economy-minded members of Congress have a bigger job before them than they realize.

Watch for: Convention of the Gold Standard League in Washington, May 5-6. Centrepiece in the proceedings will be a tribute to John Sherman, Secretary of the Treasury under Hayes, who restored our

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

monetary system to the gold standard after the greenback era of the Civil War and later. The crusade of these gold standard people seems to have made some impact on the mind of Harold Stassen, who recently said in a speech: "Therefore I present to you as one of the four principal planks in my platform for the Presidency, the establishment of a solid American dollar with a modern gold standard." (See Professor Spahr's discussion of this in his current *Monetary Notes*.)

A speech in Jackson, Miss., on April 8, by Senator Karl Mundt. Much discussion here as to whether Mundt in that speech will resume his crusade for party realignment. The candidacy of Sen. Russell and various developments suggesting that Mundt's dream may come to pass offer the Senator an opportunity to address Southerners on this subject. On the other hand, the realignment crusade has — in a manner of speaking — gone underground for various reasons, one of which is the embarrassment it could cause to both Republicans and Democrats who favor it privately, but are now in the throes of their primary campaigns.

Revisionism: Now that Clement Attlee, former British Labor premier, is out of office, he is beginning to talk. What he has to say about Franklin D. Roosevelt will interest those who are revising the official propaganda version of the late war. Attlee knows whereof he speaks, for he served as Deputy Prime Minister in Mr. Churchill's coalition war cabinet and was privy to Winston's troubles with Franklin.

Attlee, in an article in the monthly *National and English Review*, blames some of our troubles today on Roosevelt's blunders in foreign policy during the war. He remarks that American opposition to exploitation of allied victory in Italy arose from "failure to understand the importance of political strategy. The failures to press on with the attack from Italy left the deliverance of central and southeastern Europe to the Russians. The President seems to have thought that Britain was, and that Russia was not, an imperialist power. In the east and west, he made unnecessary concessions to the Russians for which we are all paying today. In any event, these concessions were given for nothing. For Russian help was not needed to defeat Japan. In fact the Russians have profited in the Far East from victories won by the forces of Democracy."

We fixed our subscription price in 1944 — when a dollar could buy a lot more printing and office help than it does now. During the past year, the inflationary pressure on our subscription price threatened to break through our reluctance to increase this price. But, finally, we found a way of defeating this pressure: by abandoning first class mail in favor of the much cheaper second class mail rates. We were inspired to make the change by a ruling of the Post Office Department that gives first class delivery to weekly or daily publications designated as eligible for what is called "newspaper treatment".

Since January 23, HUMAN EVENTS has been going out on this special category of second class mail. In most cases, the copies have reached the readers as promptly as under first class. In some cases, however, often where the subscriber lives in a small town, delivery has been late.

We assure our subscribers that all copies are sent out from Washington properly addressed and at the same time as formerly. We have entered complaints about each individual case of slow delivery at the Post Office and the postal authorities promise to investigate.

Inquiry at the Washington Post Office brings the following advice: Subscribers should enter complaints about slow delivery with their local postmasters. Please do so. Also, send us your postal zone number; that will help.

Lonigan: Edna Lonigan writes for us the following review of a current controversial piece:

Fortune magazine devotes its whole February issue to the subject, "The Government of the U.S.A.". This report by a journal serving free enterprise gives an exact measure of the intellectual tools with which Americans are meeting the crisis of a millenium.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An opening article on "Mr. Truman's White House" describes the new presidency which is hidden behind the old and trusted facade of the White House. The authors then deal with the powerful bureaus through which the White House rules — Budget Bureau, National Security Council, Economic Advisers and (more recently) Mutual Security and Defense Mobilization. They also picture the power-drunk Interior Department and "The Spreading State of Welfare" under Oscar Ewing. In short, they have all the facts, and nothing of the truth.

The editors believe Big Government will continue, whoever is President. "The main reforms . . . of the New Deal are here to stay and so are America's responsibilities beyond the seas." They believe the first axiom of the new politics, that the strong State has a "new" solution for "new" problems.

What the editors miss is the fact that the growth of the American executive, represents not only a change in size, but also a qualitative change, in fact a revolution. The American political system was formerly horizontal, with power divided into many pieces, and distributed widely. The parts were free and equal, with a share in sovereignty. But "revolution" has transformed the American executive into a vertical organization in which all the pieces of power interlock in serried ranks, subject to control from one center — on the model of all armies. Because they have missed this essential point, the editors present their "facts" within the intellectual framework devised by the Fair Deal.

The authors deplore the decline of the Cabinet. They report that Congress is "foundering". They say, "Most of the nation's most important laws . . . now originate somewhere in the vast offices that are under the control of the President; instead of having a judicious President exercising veto power over an impetuous Congress, as the Founding Fathers planned, we now have a Congress exercising veto power over the President." They virtually admit Congress has lost control of the sword.

The editors miss the fact that Congress and the Cabinet have broken down for the same reason — it is not possible to have a great build-up of vertical power and retain the institutions of horizontal power. Vertical power is always stronger. They cite technical difficulties in the work of Congress, like cumbersome committees or lack of staff, but they are not the explanation. No improvement in machinery will help Congress cope with an executive power which manages a quarter of the national income.

When the executive has that much income it can buy into every agency of private and local life — business, schools, colleges, the press. The machinery of Congress has failed because the Federal government is now organizing the bases of its power not in Washington or at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, but in every election district in the country. Congress represents the voters who are free to choose between the party in power and the opposition party. How many such free men are left?

The *Fortune* authors outline a good plan for trimming the Interior Department down to size, and returning its holdings to private management. But they do not perceive that Interior has grown great because it serves the new political order. Its power comes not from Congress or the people, but from the share of big spending Oscar Chapman earns by building up a new vertical power system in his domain.

Present foreign policy, like welfare, is taken for granted by the *Fortune* authors, because they miss the key: that our welfare at home and our largess abroad are geared to the same overriding purpose. The expenditures solve no problem but the problem of power.

The Court Historians Versus Revisionism: Our limited supply of Dr. Barnes' pamphlet is now exhausted. Additional copies may be obtained by writing Mr. Frank Carpenter, Freeman's Journal Press, Cooperstown, New York.

Entered as second class matter at the Post Office, Washington, D. C.

Quotation up to a paragraph is permitted with credit to HUMAN EVENTS. For reproduction or more extensive quotation address requests to HUMAN EVENTS, 1136 Eighteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C. Trial subscription, three months for $3. Six months, $5.50. One year, $10. Two years, $18. Domestic airmail (including APO and FPO) one year, $12.00; foreign (regular mail) one year, $11. Foreign airmail rates on request. Please remit in U.S.A. DOLLARS. Allow two weeks for new subscription or change in address to become effective.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED